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Ten things the Pope has advised young people to do

To talk to God every day, read the Bible, go to Mass on Sundays, tell our woes and sorrows to Our Lord, give a good example or be useful to others: these are some of the things the Pope asks young people to do.

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1) Dialogue with God

Some of you might perhaps describe your adolescence in the words with which Edith Stein, [...] described her own: "*I consciously and deliberately lost the habit of praying*". During these days, **you can once again have a moving experience of prayer as dialogue with God**, the God who we know loves us and whom we in turn wish to love.

2) Share your joys and pains

Open wide your hearts to God! Let yourselves be surprised by Christ! Let him have "the right of free speech" during these days! Open the doors of your freedom to his merciful love! **Share your joys and pains with Christ**, and let him enlighten your minds with his light and touch your hearts with his grace.

3) Trust in Our Lord

Dear young people, the happiness you are seeking, the happiness you

have a right to enjoy has a name and a face: it is Jesus of Nazareth, hidden in the Eucharist. Only he gives the fullness of life to humanity! With Mary, say your own "yes" to God, for he wishes to give himself to you. I repeat today what I said at the beginning of my Pontificate: **"If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing**, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation". Be completely convinced of this: Christ takes from you nothing that is beautiful and great, but brings everything to perfection for the glory of God, the happiness of men and women, and the salvation of the world.

4) *Be cheerful: want to be saints*

In addition to vocations to special forms of consecration there is also the specific vocation of all baptised Christians: that is also a vocation to that "high standard" of ordinary Christian living which is expressed in holiness. When we meet Christ and accept His Gospel, life changes and we are driven to communicate our experience to others. The Church needs saints. All are called to holiness, and holy people alone can renew humanity.

5) God: to be a subject of conversation with friends

There are so many of our **contemporaries who do not yet know the love of God** or who are seeking to fill their hearts with trifling substitutes. Dear young people, the Church needs genuine witnesses for the new evangelisation: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with

Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others.

6) Go to Mass on Sunday

Do not be deterred from **taking part in Sunday Mass**, and help others to discover it too. This is because the Eucharist releases the joy that we need so much, and we must learn to grasp it ever more deeply, we must learn to love it. Let us pledge ourselves to do this – it is worth the effort! Let us discover the intimate riches of the Church's liturgy and its true greatness: it is not we who are celebrating for ourselves, but it is the living God himself who is preparing a banquet for us. Through your love for the Eucharist you will also rediscover the sacrament of Reconciliation, in which the merciful goodness of God always allows us to make a fresh start in our lives.

7) Show that God is not sad

Anyone who has discovered Christ must lead others to him. **A great joy cannot be kept to oneself.** It has to be passed on. In vast areas of the world today there is a strange forgetfulness of God. It seems as if everything would be just the same even without him. But at the same time there is a feeling of frustration, a sense of dissatisfaction with everyone and everything. People tend to exclaim: "This cannot be what life is about!" Indeed not.

8) To know the faith

Help people to discover the true star which points out the way to us: Jesus Christ! Let us seek to know him better and better, so as to be able to guide others to him with conviction. This is why love for Sacred Scripture is so important, and in consequence, it is important **to know the faith of the Church** which opens up for us the meaning of Scripture.

9) *Be useful: help*

If we think and live according to our communion with Christ, then our eyes will be opened. Then we will no longer be content to scrape a living just for ourselves, but we will see where and how we are needed.

Living and acting thus, we will soon realize that it is much better to be useful and at the disposal of others than to be concerned only with the comforts that are offered to us. I know that you as young people have great aspirations, that you want to pledge yourselves to build a better world. Let others see this, let the world see it, since this is exactly the witness that the world expects from the disciples of Jesus Christ; in this way, and through your love above all, the world will be able to discover the star that we follow as believers.

10) *Read the Bible*

The secret of acquiring "*an understanding heart*" is to train your heart to *listen*. This is obtained by persistently meditating on the word of God and by remaining firmly rooted in it through the commitment to persevere in getting to know it better. My dear young friends, **I urge you to become familiar with the Bible**, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow. By reading it, you will learn to know Christ. Note what Saint Jerome said in this regard:

"Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ"

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Summary

To build your life on Christ, to accept the word with joy and put its teachings into practice: this, young people of the third millennium, should be your programme! There is an urgent need for the emergence of a

*new generation of apostles anchored firmly in the word of Christ, capable of responding to the challenges of our times and prepared to spread the Gospel far and wide. It is this that the Lord asks of you, it is to this that the Church invites you, and it is this that the world - even though it may not be aware of it - expects of you! If Jesus calls you, do not be afraid to respond to him with generosity, especially when he asks you to follow him in the consecrated life or in the priesthood. Do not be afraid; trust in him and you will not be disappointed. **BENEDICT XVI***

The extracts above are from addresses by Pope Benedict XVI, except nos.4 and 5, which are taken from the address by Pope John Paul II of 6 August 2004, looking forward to the World Youth Day in Cologne which was presided over by his successor one year later.

Extracts taken from addresses by Pope Benedict and John Paul II

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